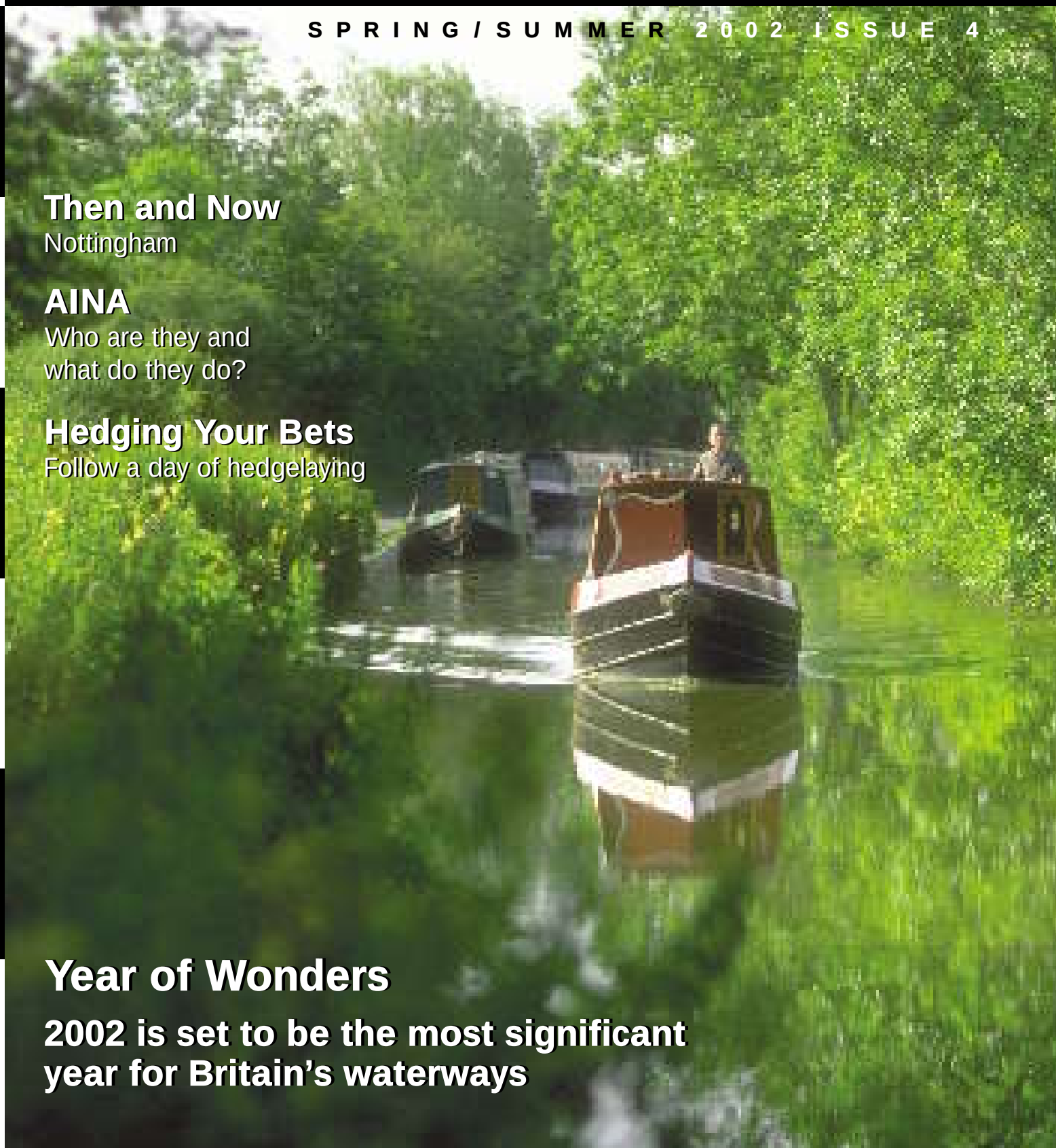
British Waterways

waterfront

SPRING/SUMMER 2002 ISSUE 4



Then and Now
Nottingham

AINA
Who are they and what do they do?

Hedging Your Bets
Follow a day of hedgelaying

Year of Wonders
2002 is set to be the most significant year for Britain's waterways

Frontlines

A word from the editor

For those of you who didn't manage to catch the canal episode of Fred Dibnah's series 'Building of Britain' (BBC2 11th March), you really missed a treat. Fred looked back at canals, revisiting the places in the north where he grew up. He looked at how they were built and at the early waterway engineers. You'd have been forgiven for thinking he was talking about canals being built nowadays, especially with the amount of restoration we are seeing taking place around the country at the moment.

In fact BW and its partners are so enthused by what is happening that they held an event in London on 19 March. Around 500 guests turned up to show their support and look at plans to build and restore canals in the future.

So excited are we at *Waterfront* that we have dedicated the centre pages of the magazine to all the restorations that have happened and those that are in the pipeline. By the time the Kennet & Avon Canal is completed at the end of the year there will be another 220 miles of restored or refurbished waterway to cruise…

…and here's to many more to come!

Nicky Ross
Editor, Waterfront

Editor Nicky Ross at the top of the Falkirk Wheel in Scotland

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waterfront

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Front cover picture:
Boating on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal

Up Front news in Brief

YOUR COUNTRYSIDE *you're welcome*

BW is among 50 organisations taking part in a national campaign to promote the benefits of the English countryside and remind people that it's open for business again now that the foot and mouth outbreak is over.

As part of the campaign, which is supported by DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), the DCMS (Department for Culture Media and Sport), the English Tourism Council and the Countryside Agency. Launched by Joan Collins, (pictured right) March 11-17 was officially designated 'Your Countryside, You're Welcome' week. With a wide range of events and shows taking place this year, BW will be providing plenty of opportunities for people to get out and about in the countryside.

Some well known faces are already lining up to support the campaign including actress and boater Prunella Scales, who says "For me, one of the most memorable places in the English countryside is the view from the top of Bingley Five on the Leeds & Liverpool Canal."

BAPS!

Although waterways are man-made they provide a great range of natural environments that are inhabited by a huge number of plant and animal species. Waterways, hedgerows, towpaths and even built structures are home to bats, snakes, otters and sponges to name a few!

BW produces BAPs or Biodiversity Action Plans – which are basically plans to look after waterways wildlife and their habitats. For a leaflet explaining BAPs and a postcard please contact the BW customer service centre on 01923 201120 or email enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk

THE BRAND NEW BOATERS' HANDBOOK

Boat licence holders will have noticed that a copy of the new Boaters' Handbook is included with this issue. The handbook, essentially the 'highway code' of the waterways, offers practical, illustrated advice on boat-handling, safety and waterway warning symbols.

It includes real-life examples to help you avoid collisions and injuries whilst boating, as well as a section on how to deal with vandals on the waterways. The advice contained within the handbook was compiled by BW and the EA, with help from the British Marine Federation and boating user groups. It is also available in an online format, as the Boaters' Safety Toolkit, at www.aina.org.uk/handbook.

The online Toolkit can be downloaded in its entirety from the website, which offers an easily printable pdf version. Boaters can also select individual topics that they wish to brush up on.
Hire boat and timeshare companies in particular will find the alternative option of cutting and pasting individual elements of the Toolkit useful when compiling their own material for customers.

LOG BOOK SURVEY

Every year the BW research team work on numerous projects that require accurate estimates of how boaters use their craft, and how much they spend in the process. This is done to help BW win funding from bodies like the Lottery, get planning permission and so on. In order to gather this data a 'Log Book' survey has been designed in which boat owners keep a diary of all their boating activities for a whole year.

About 650 private boat owners have registered for this year's survey. Each participant has been sent a specially designed diary for their boat, enabling them to record details of cruising routes and spending every time they use their craft throughout the year.

The completed books will be sent to the market research team in Watford at the end of the year for analysis. They will then be returned to the boater as a souvenir of their year's cruising.

The book also contains a comprehensive list of canal events throughout the year.

The research team still has a limited number of these log books available and are keen to include as many boaters in the project as possible. If you would like further information about the project, or would like to volunteer to keep a log book, please contact Julian Ross on 01923 201103 or julian.ross@britishwaterways.co.uk.

SAVOUR A MOMENT IN TIME...

Believe it or not promotional films about inland waterways were being produced as early as the 1930's. BW has just re-released a collection of historical films capturing the unique waterway atmosphere from days gone by.

Five VHS videos entitled Waterways our Heritage, Inland Waterways, Broad Waterways, Take to the Boats and Gentle Highway, each comprising of two or more films, are available at £14.95 each (plus £2 p&p) from the BW Customer Service Centre by phoning 01923 201120 or emailing enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk. Quote '*Waterfront*' when ringing and you'll be able to claim the special reader's offer of all videos for just £60 (excl. p&p).

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

BW will invest millions of pounds in improvements to the system this year in addition to expenditure already planned. What has been a bumper year for commercial successes means that BW is able to launch the 'Make a Difference' campaign.

The unprecedented spend will include £9 million on upgrading service blocks, towpath access, interpretation and information, £3 million on dredging and £7 million on maintenance. Look out for more details in the next edition of *Waterfront*.

CRICK BOAT SHOW

This year's Crick Boat Show, managed by BW in partnership with TWT, will be held 1-3 June at Crick Marina near Daventry in Northamptonshire. It promises more inland boating entertainment than ever before with new exhibitors including wide-beam craft, river cruisers and day boats, as well as trip boats, on-water activities, boat holidays, seminars, children's entertainment, country activities, musicians and a real ale bar.

Many boats will be on display from historic working craft to brand new narrowboats with all the conveniences of a modern holiday cottage.

Crick is easily accessible by road from Junction 18 of the M1 and there is ample free parking on site. Adult tickets are priced at £6 and discounts are available on tickets purchased in advance on 01788 534974. New for 2002, The Crick Boat Show Club, sponsored by *Waterways World*, is free to join and offers a regular newsletter, discounted admission and use of an exclusive lounge at the show.

For more information about the Crick Boat Show call 01788 891555 or see www.crickboatshow.com.

Blue is the new green!

Black, royal blue and white have replaced the green workwear we are used to seeing on the canal bank. BW has introduced the new uniform after extensive consultation with staff and users about colour and the quality of the garments. The new workwear uniforms were introduced in February 2002.

Screen saver

Download the free BW screen saver by clicking on *www.britishwaterways.co.uk/screensaver* and transport yourself from your screen to scenes from the canal, complete with rippling water effect.

Heritage Open Days 2002

Would you like to be part of England's biggest and most popular voluntary cultural event? Heritage Open Days is run by the Civic Trust and takes place this year from 13-16 September.
The event is a celebration of architecture, local history and culture, offering free public access to a huge range of historic and contemporary buildings across England including sites on the waterways.

To receive more information, contact The Civic Trust, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AW, or visit their website www.heritageopendays.org or call 020 7930 9294.

EXTENDED OPENING HOURS FOR BW CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE

Extended opening hours for the restructured BW Customer Service Centre have been introduced to include weekday evenings and Saturday mornings. The new opening times are part of a series of moves to improve the services available to boaters and other waterway visitors looking for information on the inland waterways.

The new BW Customer Service Centre combines the expertise of the Customer Service and Craft Licensing teams, providing a one-stop shop for all enquiries about using or visiting the inland waterways.

For information about the inland waterways there is also the revamped BW website at www.britishwaterways.co.uk, which provides a fun, interactive resource, including a state-of-the-art mapping facility. In addition, BW staff in waterway offices throughout England, Scotland and Wales are able to help with local waterway enquiries.
Out-of-hours, BW continues to provide a 24-hour emergency freephone service on 0800 47 999 47. You can no longer dial 100 and ask for freephone canals, however this direct dial number is now also free for mobile users.

The BW Customer Service Centre can be contacted 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to1pm on Saturdays, by telephone on 01923 201120, by fax on 01923 201304 or by email: enquiries.hq@britishwaterways.co.uk. The service is closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

FROM FOOTBALL TO MPs

BW spend a fair amount of time meeting MP's and dignitaries all over the country. Pictured here (left to right) BW chairman George Greener meets Joan Walley, MP for Stoke-on-Trent North and the Chairman of Port Vale Football Club, Bill Bell, after discussions about the regeneration of Burslem & Middleport.

'Walk on Water', the first national sponsored walk on Britain's canals and rivers, will take place on 13 & 14 July 2002. BW has joined up with Burdens Charitable Foundation and The Waterways Trust to stage this event, which consists of 22 walks around the country.

The organisers estimate that £150,000 will be raised over the weekend, the first half of which will go towards building a new school for visually impaired children in Burkina Faso, West Africa. The second half will be used to improve towpath access for people with disabilities along with helping projects that benefit young people.
For more information and a walk leaflet please contact 0845 6024 565

NEWARK - DRAGON BOAT

BW has launched the first Newark on Water Dragon Boat Challenge. This spectacular team event will take place on the River Trent on Saturday 8 June during Newark on Water Festival.

More than 20 crews will be involved in the fast and furious racing. Each crew is made up of between 8 and 10 paddlers, a beating drummer at the bow of the boat and a steering helm (provided by the organisers) at the stern. No previous experience is required to enter the challenge which promises to be exciting, colourful and great fun.

The event offers participating teams the opportunity to raise money for the Newark on Water nominated charity, The British Red Cross, or for their own chosen charity. If you would like further information or an entry form please contact: Gable Events, Tel: 01780 470718, Email: info@gable-events.co.uk or visit: www.dragonboatfestivals.co.uk/newark

SPRING CLEANING

BW staff were out in force between 18 and 23 March to spring clean the system. Nearly all staff, both office and waterway based, managed to get out onto their local waterway for at least a day and help in a clearing up project.

MOBILE TO THE RESCUE

Licence evasion is a serious issue. BW has issued its patrol officers with mobile handsets (PDAs) to help them easily check on the spot if boats are properly licensed whilst out and about.

Just one example of their success is on the Sharpness Canal where, thanks to his mobile handset, a patrol officer recently caught someone trying to use a forged licence.

Remember if you are suspicious the licence evasion hotline number is 01923 201122 that you can call confidentially. Try and get as much information as possible such as the boat name, index number, location and expiry date.

BOAT LICENCE HOLDERS - DON'T MISS THE BOAT...

BW advises that if boaters want to claim the prompt payment discount, applications must be properly completed when submitted. If BW has to get back in contact for any missing bits – such as the BSS Pass Certificate, mooring or insurance details or correct payment – then the amount will have to be paid in full.

When does your current Boat Safety Certificate expire? Just like the MOT, it exists to keep waterway users safe, so don't wait for your certificate to expire before you get it renewed. You won't get a licence without a Pass Certificate. If you're coming up for your first BSS renewal, remember that the Scheme has been improved to make it easier to understand and comply with these important safety requirements. If you renew early, the examiners are authorised to grant a Pass Certificate for four years and two months so you don't lose out.

The BSS team is keen to help you. If you have any queries, first check www.boatsafetyscheme.com if you can. Otherwise, technical help is at hand on 01923 201278, while general enquiries for BSS literature should be made to the BW Customer Service Centre on 01923 201120.

WINTER ENGINEERING PROGRAMME

BW has spent £36 million on planned engineering and maintenance work this winter

The majority of canals cared for by BW were dug by hand more than 200 years ago by armies of 'navvies' wielding shovels and picks.

Today, even though we are living in the 21st century, it still takes a lot of man-hours and effort to care for and maintain the 2000-mile waterway network.

Just as essential repairs and maintenance on motorways are carried out at night when there's not as much traffic about, the annual waterway maintenance, or 'stoppages' programme takes place during the winter months, when the days are cold, the nights are long and less boaters venture out onto the canals.

The majority of work to keep BW's canals and rivers safe and useable takes place between October and March. Last winter BW spent £36 million on planned engineering and maintenance, covering a huge variety of tasks from replacing locks gates to repairing aqueducts.

This is just a snap shot of some of the work BW's intrepid guys and gals (now in blue!) have tackled this winter to keep the waterways running smoothly.

NEW AQUEDUCT!

BW is making preparations to build a new aqueduct to carry the Kennet & Avon Canal over the planned A350 by pass at Semmington near Trowbridge in Wiltshire. Alun Griffiths Construction is currently building a temporary diversion channel on behalf of BW. With protecting wildlife a priority, a fish rescue was carried out on the canal before the length was dewatered. Boats will be able to use the new channel from March 2002 and work will start on the aqueduct later in the year.

REPLACING LOCK GATES

As part of BW London's stoppage programme to carry out repairs and engineering works across the network, the bottom lock gates were replaced at Old Ford Lock on the Regents Canal in Tower Hamlets. The lock, which is over 445m^2, was drained of approximately 270 thousand litres of water (that's over 1000 bath tubs!) and the chamber bottom was cleaned. The new lock gates weighed 3 tonnes and were 4m by 2.3m each. BW London's own maintenance team also carried out minor repairs to the lock walls before moving on to replace more gates at Hawley Lock at Camden.

PIER-HEAD RECONSTRUCTION

As part of the ongoing engineering works on the Peak & Potteries Waterways a pier-head reconstruction took place on the Trent & Mersey Canal (north). The BW waterway team carried out the works along with maintenance and restoration to the canal wall.

INSPECTIONS!

BW carry out inspection of structures on a routine basis. Cromwell Lock on the Trent Navigation was recently dewatered to investigate the construction and condition of the lock floor as well as the walls and supporting ground in preparation for future strengthening works. After an intensive examination the condition was found to be variable over the downstream section and it is likely that sections of the floor will need to be replaced in the future. It is not a danger to users at this time therefore priority was given to other maintenance works in the region. Site works are provisionally intended for winter 2002/03, whilst plans are being made on how to carry out these repairs with minimum disruption to canal users.

RESTORING LOCKS AND A FISH RESCUE

Major engineering works have taken place on the historic Farmer's Bridge Locks flight in central Birmingham.
The works on the Birmingham & Fazeley Canal were part of an Omnibus partnership contract (a contract set up with one major engineering company to gain economies of scale). The canal was drained from locks five to thirteen and, with conservation in mind as always, the fish rescued. The locks were refurbished and essential maintenance was carried out. There were also towpath and waterway wall repairs, all in keeping with the canal's historic and natural environment. The work was in edition to planned waterside improvements that will be carried out in the near future, which is spearheaded by the Birmingham Canals Partnership.

Opposite page: Old Ford Lock on the Regents Canal in Tower Hamlets, London
Below: The Farmers Bridge Locks, Birmingham
Below left: examining works
Left: works on the new channel at Semmington, near Trowbridge, Wiltshire

AINA

Association of Inland Navigation Authorities

The Association of Inland Navigation Authorities (AINA) was set up in December 1996 with strong encouragement from government, to provide, for the first time ever, a single voice on waterway management issues.

So, on its fifth anniversary, *Waterfront* spoke to AINA executive Philip Burgess to find out what their role is and what they've been up to these past few years.

"In a nutshell AINA's broad purpose is to assist and co-ordinate the management, maintenance and development of Britain's inland waterways as an economic, environmental, recreational and social resource" explains Philip.

"Our 1999 strategy *'Steering a Fresh Course'* was the first review of current issues affecting inland waterways from the perspective of navigation authorities" continues Philip, who has worked for AINA since July 2000. "It looked at how these issues should be addressed to secure a viable and sustainable future for the waterways. It also identified actions needed to achieve these aims."

Chaired by BW Chief Executive Dave Fletcher, AINA comprises 29 navigation authorities throughout the UK of varied size and structure. Between them they own and manage some 3000 miles of waterway.

AINA has built up a strong portfolio of advice and guidance in its short life, Waterfront looks at a selection here.

MISSING LINKS

In November 2001 AINA launched its inspirational document *'A Vision for the Strategic Enhancement of Britain's Inland Navigation Network'.*

Identifying eleven 'missing links' on waterway network, the vision highlights restoration and new build schemes that will provide cross-country routes for broad beam craft. Making the vision a reality will make it possible to navigate the country's inland waterways extensively by linking the estuaries of the Thames, Severn, Humber and Mersey, as well as the Wash and the English Channel.

Each of the projects alone would add significantly to the network, but taken together they would be a considerable enhancement to the waterways of the 21st Century. So far the general response to the launch of this vision has been very encouraging.

SWEET HARMONISATION

Co-sponsored by the Department of the Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), AINA is currently undertaking a research programme, designed to harmonise members' approaches to the operation and management of their navigations. Practical guidance is expected to come out of this research in the summer including environmental advice, good practice on waterway standards, using a common approach to conserve historic structures and a water resource management plan amongst other things.

SAFETY FIRST

A project to look at the accidents and incidents on waterways and how best to minimise those risks is also in the pipeline. Again, co-sponsored by DEFRA, guidance should be available at the end of the year.

MORE FREIGHT!

In June last year AINA produced a strategy for freight on Britain's inland waterways. The strategy identified opportunities and made recommendations to help increase freight carriage on water.

Representing the collective views of navigation authorities to government, the EU and other statutory agencies is a significant part of AINA's work. This freight strategy is just one example where AINA has managed an industry response to the government's aspiration to transfer 3.5 per cent of road freight movements to water.

WORKING TOGETHER

AINA has come a long way in a few short years. It has started to build up a portfolio of good management practice. It has also won the confidence and trust of its members by demonstrating the importance of combining their expertise to give advice in a timely and effective way.

But AINA has just begun. *Steering a Fresh Course*, like the government's *Waterways for Tomorrow* document, is a long-term strategy that will require the skilful application of resources and the concerted efforts of many to deliver.

As Philip puts it "to achieve our objectives, we have to encourage so many individuals and organisations, from commercial operators to waterway users, to actively participate. This will ensure that both AINA and government strategies and policies are fully implemented to the benefit of all the people of the country."

Further information about AINA, its members and copies of reports are available from AINA executive Philip Burgess on 01642 590257, or via the AINA website at www.aina.org.uk

THE ASSOCIATION OF INLAND NAVIGATION AUTHORITIES (AINA) WAS SET UP IN DECEMBER 1996 WITH STRONG ENCOURAGEMENT FROM GOVERNMENT, TO PROVIDE, FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, A SINGLE VOICE ON WATERWAY MANAGEMENT ISSUES.

Opposite page: Boating on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal
Opposite page top: Canoeing on the Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal

Top left: Sailing on the Broads
Top centre: Cruising down the River Thames
Top right: Freight on the Aire & Calder Navigation

Main picture: Lighting project, Birmingham

Left to Right: School children on a waterside visit,
New access for Ratho Edinbugh,
Visiting the National Hindu Temple site by boat,
Canal clean-up, Monmouthshire & Brecon Canal

WATERWAYS FOR PEOPLE

HALF THE UK POPULATION LIVES WITHIN FIVE MILES OF A BW CANAL OR RIVER... BW IS DOING ITS BEST TO ENCOURAGE MORE PEOPLE TO USE THEM

If you have ever been dazzled by the sparkling Jewellery Quarter in Birmingham, where fascinating gem shops line the streets, then you'll know that this revitalised area is one of the waterway network's real jewels in the crown.

But once the bustle and business of the day ceased, the slightly dark and daunting towpath leading to the quarter deterred some visitors. That's all changed now thanks to BW and its many partners.

The towpath has been transformed with brilliant laser-cut images and floods of lighting in rich reds and blues. It's all part of range of BW projects taking place around the country to encourage more people to use the waterways on their doorsteps. The Birmingham scheme has led to a significant reduction of crime and anti-social behaviour in the urban area.

BW has just published *'Waterways for People'*, which describes its aims to broaden the appeal and meaning of canals and rivers to everyone in society. It is packed with dozens of projects and schemes from all parts of the country encouraging people, who may not necessarily have done so before, to take to the towpaths and discover the wide variety of benefits the waterways offer.

We take a look a just a few of these schemes.

TIVIDALE, Black Country

Britain's National Hindu Temple is under construction on a canalside site at Tividale in the Black Country. The Temple Trust, Sandwell Health Authority and BW have been running projects to tap into the canal memories of local people.

RATHO, Edinburgh

Ratho is just outside Edinburgh, an easily reached rural idyll from the city. A scheme was introduced to make it easier for groups of all abilities to visit and enjoy the site which now includes easily accessible towpaths and car park, specially designed picnic areas, new resting places, and a sensory hedge.

MONMOUTHSHIRE & BRECON CANAL NEW DEAL, South Wales

Waterway improvements can be allied to the government's 'New Deal' employment training. On the Monmouthshire and Brecon Canal, training projects have been based around towpath improvements and lock gate construction.

PROBATION DEAL, nationwide

The Probation Service has built a strong relationship with BW in many regions, with offenders involved in canal clean-ups and graffiti clearance work.

EDUCATION, nationwide

BW surveys indicate that young people tend to visit waterways less than other age groups. BW has been successfully delivering education projects for a number of years and all of the projects have a common aim: to promote the waterways to young people.

BW, along with the Inland Waterways Association and The Waterways Trust, have jointly created "WOW" (Wild Over Waterways). It is aimed at targetting an audience of 7-11 year olds in three ways:

- a series of easy to use resources for teachers and pupils which show many of the ways that inland waterways can be used as part of the curriculum in primary schools
- an innovative website that will provide online activities for children
- waterways-related ideas for teachers and other adults.

Schemes like 'Canal Crazy' engage children through out-of-school events with the message that the waterways are a vibrant, dynamic and integral part of our lives today.

If you would like more details on the work BW is doing to involve more people in waterways please contact the BW Customer Service Centre on 01923 201120 for our *'Waterways for People'* document or visit www.britishwaterways.co.uk

YEAR OF WONDERS

2002 is set to be the most significant year for Britain's waterways in more than two centuries.

The amazing Falkirk Wheel boat lift recently turned for the first time, reconnecting Scotland's Forth & Clyde and Union canals with a breathtaking structure that is part engineering and part modern sculpture.

The restoration of the Anderton Boat Lift will bring a slumbering Victorian giant back to life. The reopened Rochdale Canal will provide new destinations and fresh challenges for boaters. The brand new Millennium Ribble Link, the first canal to be built for almost 100 years, will give added impetus to the long-cherished dream of connecting Kendal in the Lake District to the rest of the waterway network via the restored Northern Reaches of the Lancaster Canal.

It's a year of remarkable achievements built firmly on the vision, partnership and support of organisations, societies and individuals that have believed passionately in waterways.

Left to Right: The Falkirk Wheel, the Chesterfield Canal, the Kennet & Avon Canal, Standedge Tunnel on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal.

And now that belief is justified. The reopenings are demonstrating that living, vital waterways bring significant economic, environmental and social benefits to communities.

When the Falkirk Wheel is officially opened by Her Majesty The Queen as part of the Golden Jubilee tour of Scotland in May, the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals will be reunited for the first time in around 40 years, reviving the historic waterway route between Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Dubbed the 'Peoples Project', the £84.5 million scheme to reopen these waterways is the biggest canal restoration ever, creating a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration across 68 miles of central Scotland. As one of the major capital 'Landmark' projects in the UK, the ambitious scheme has received £32 million from the Millennium Commission.

Recognition of its enormous economic, social, environmental, recreational and educational potential for Scotland is evident in the backing of a funding partnership between seven local authorities, The Scottish Enterprise Network, The European Regional Development Fund and BW.

It is estimated that the entire restoration project will create over 4000 jobs and will attract hundreds of boats and millions of leisure visitors to the region.

It's a year of remarkable achievements built firmly on the vision, partnership and support of organisations, societies and individuals that have believed passionately in waterways.

A NEW NATIONAL LANDMARK?

Centrepiece of the scheme, and the aspect of this bold restoration that has really captured the imagination, is the 115ft high Falkirk Wheel – a monumental structure (taller than eight stacked double decker buses) destined to become both a national landmark and major new visitor attraction for Scotland.

The only one of its kind in the world, the Wheel is a soaring and beautiful example of architectural engineering, redefining waterway design for the 21st century. Deliberately futuristic, it pushes the technology and craftsmanship of waterway giants like Telford and Brindley to a new level.

The unusual design, inspired by the Celtic double headed axe, has been recognised as sculpture by the Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland. The blade shaped arms rotate in a continuous circle simultaneously lifting and lowering two 72ft long caissons which each hold up to four boats.

GIVE IT A WHIRL

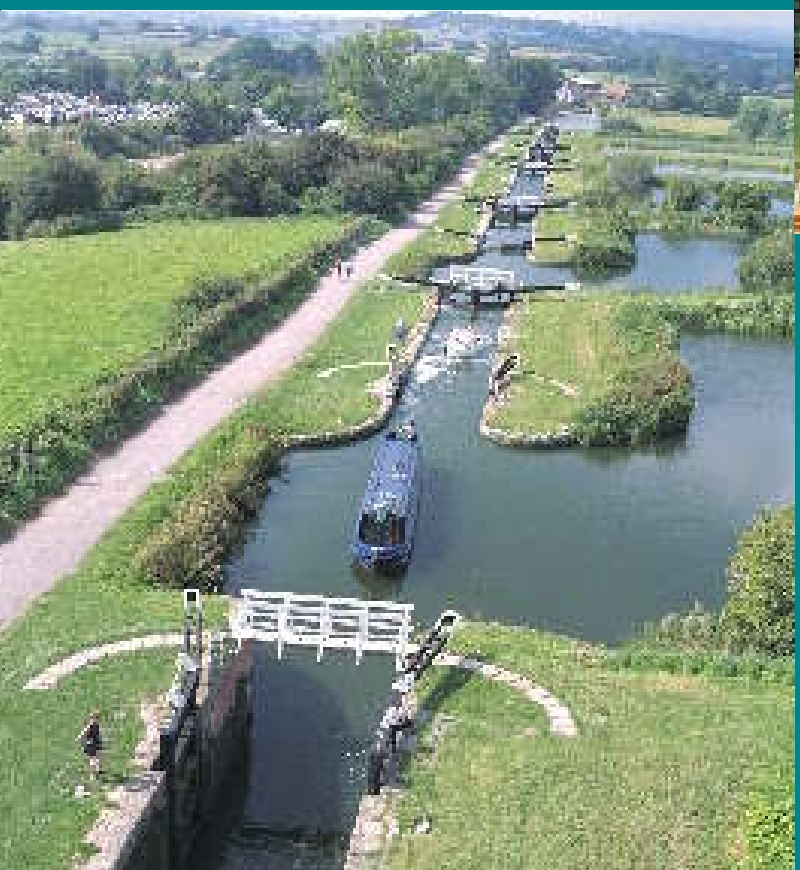
Don't take our word for it, try it for yourself! Visitors will be able to take a 40 minute round trip by boat from a specially constructed Visitor Centre, at the base of the wheel, to the upper Union Canal, through a 480ft tunnel under the historic Antonine Wall, and along the 65ft high aqueduct 'flying' to the wheel itself. The wheel will transfer boats between the two canals over a towering vertical gap.

Boats enter one of the caissons filled with water and the doors close behind to form a watertight seal. The rotation of the wheel takes seven minutes to carry passengers to a 1,080ft wide circular basin below (with moorings for more than 20 boats), where visitors can either return to the centre or continue along the canal.

General manager for the Falkirk Wheel site, Iain Herbert, says "It's the most exciting attraction to be opened in Scotland. I still delight in seeing people's faces when I take them out on site. They are just amazed by the scale of the project.

"We are looking at turning the Falkirk Wheel into a five star visitor attraction, focused on customer care and raising people's expectations of the canal network in central Scotland."

For more information on the Falkirk Wheel visit www.scottishcanals.co.uk or phone the visitor centre on 01324 671217.



AND THAT'S NOT ALL FOLKS...

It's appropriate that in the same year that the world's first ever rotating boat lift rolls into action, The Anderton Boat Lift, in Cheshire, is fully restored and operational. It reopened to visitors in March following a major fund raising and restoration programme.

Compared to the Falkirk Wheel with its sleek lines and, literally, revolutionary design that points to the future, Anderton is a magnificent example of Victorian architectural engineering at its most eccentric and practical.

Dubbed affectionately 'The Cathedral of the Canals', the Anderton Boat Lift was built in 1875 to transport cargo-carrying boats between the River Weaver and the Trent & Mersey Canal 50ft above.

YEAR OF WONDERS CONTINUED

Designed and built by engineer Edwin Clark, the lift used a revolutionary system of hydraulics and led to a number of replicas in Europe and North America.

Originally two counterbalanced tanks, supported on massive hydraulic rams and sealed by watertight doors, carried boats between the two navigations. The deceptively simple mechanism involved a small quantity of water being drawn from the lower tank to create a slight difference in weight. This, with the aid of a small steam accumulator, was all that was needed to cause the heavier tank to descend and the other to rise.

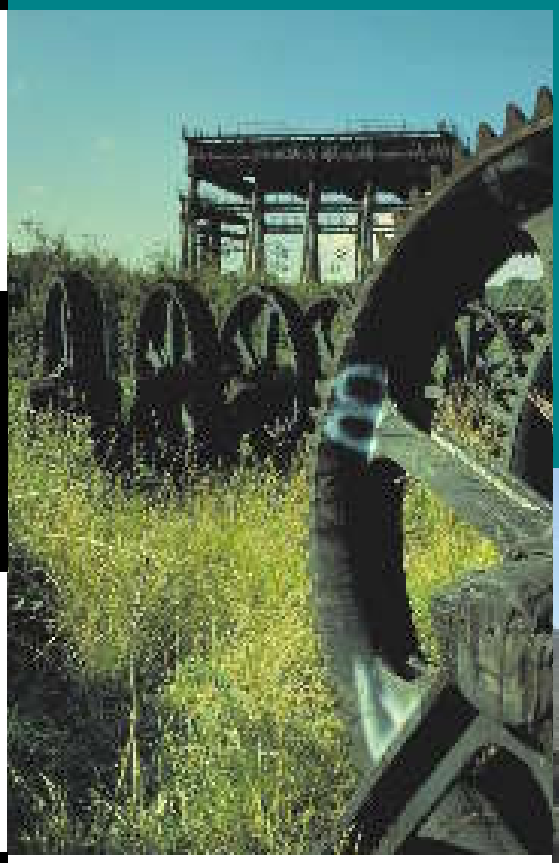
After 25 years of use, corrosion to the hydraulic rams led to a conversion to electricity and by 1908 it was transformed by the addition of a massive assembly of shafts, gears, weights and pulleys supported by a framework of tubular columns. This created the Heath-Robinsonesque appearance of the lift as we know it today.

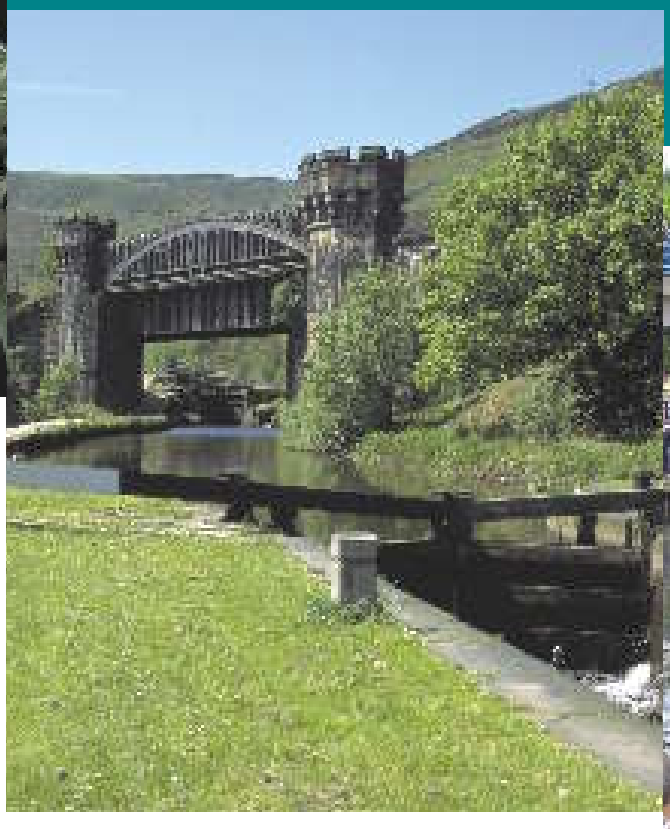
In 1983 the 'Cathedral of the Canals' fell silent after a routine safety inspection revealed serious deterioration.

Now, after years of hard work and fundraising, the dream of restoring the Anderton Boat Lift back to working order has been fulfilled. The lift is now open to the public and plans to construct a visitor centre, complete with educational and group facilities, are also underway. The restoration will play a significant role in boosting the local economy attracting 54,000 visits and over 3,000 return boat trips each year, bringing an estimated £1.2 million in visitor spending to the area.

Grants of £3.3 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund and £500,000 from English Heritage made a significant contribution to the £7 million restoration project. This made it possible for BW to carry out the restoration work in partnership with The Waterways Trust, The Inland Waterways Association (IWA), The Friends of Anderton Boat Lift and the Anderton Boat Lift Trust.

For further information including prices and booking a passage go to www.andertonboatlift.co.uk or call 01606 786777.





Left to Right: The Anderton Boat Lift, the Rochdale Canal, The Millennium Link, The Millennium Ribble Link and children enjoying the waterways.

LOOKING AHEAD

2002 is likely to be remembered by waterway enthusiasts – and we know there are a lot of you out there – as the year when Britain's canals and rivers found a new pace and a new impetus.

It's as much a matter of reinvention as restoration, with waterways demonstrating again and again that the main 'cargo' they carry today is regenerative energy. Once powerhouses of the Industrial Revolution, they are now dynamos of urban and rural renewal.

Looking ahead this year, the completed restoration of the Rochdale Canal will create a new range of leisure opportunities, including a cruising route for boats, long distance foot and cycle paths and a direct link between major urban areas across the Pennines. The scheme will make a significant contribution towards some of the region's most deprived communities, including the creation of an estimated 9000 permanent jobs and nearly 5000 temporary jobs, and generating around £1.64 million in tourist spending each year.

An exciting boating route is due to be open this summer with the completion of the new 4-mile Millennium Ribble Link. Once the link is completed, the Lancaster Canal will be connected with the main network for the first time. Boats will be able to travel between the Lancaster Canal and the Leeds & Liverpool Canal via a crossing of the Ribble Estuary. It's set to play an important role in boosting the local economy while increasing the chances of restoration for the Northern Reaches of the Lancaster Canal.

With the reopening of the Huddersfield Narrow Canal last year and the completion of the restoration of the Kennet & Avon Canal on schedule for December this year, it's a great time to explore the ever expanding network.

And on the next two pages we'll tell you about some exciting plans to extend the rest of the network.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING?

On March 19 BW held a special event in London celebrating the year of reopenings. Guests were invited to the Glazier's Hall overlooking the Thames in London to attend 'Unlocked & Unlimited', building partnerships for new waterways'. Representatives of the many partners, organisations and societies who are helping BW to successfully complete major waterway restorations in 2002 and beyond were amongst the 450 guests.

But the event was not just a celebration, it was also an acknowledgement that there is still a great deal to do and many more challenges ahead.

After an early allied victory in 1942 Churchill said: "This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is perhaps the end of the beginning." And that's probably a fair description of where we stand today.

For BW and its partners the challenge now is to carry forward the momentum created by the tremendous achievements to date and to bring the benefits of waterway regeneration to millions more across the country.

At the event, in March, BW unveiled nine key schemes which will form the core of the next phase of waterway renewal. This next phase will create exciting destinations and attractions on the network, including the building of a major new canal.

It is also important that waterway customers are aware of these goals from the earliest stage, helping BW to steer a course into the future.

WHAT NEXT?

THE BEDFORD & MILTON KEYNES WATERWAY

The idea of connecting the Grand Union Canal to the River Great Ouse was first proposed by Samuel Whitbread in 1810. The link would enable navigation between the then growing waterway network and the waterways of East Anglia.

Now nearly 200 years on, BW, working closely with the Bedford and Milton Keynes Waterway Trust and a range of project partners, is re-evaluating the 190 year-old proposal and has commissioned a £50,000 feasibility study.

The project would involve the construction of the first major new canal in Britain in nearly 100 years. It would use modern engineering solutions to create a 21st century waterway; a linear waterpark that links the south east to East Anglia and will help kick start regional economic growth through leisure, business and employment opportunities.

THE COTSWOLD CANALS

The restoration of the Cotswold Canals would once again link England's great rivers, the Thames and the Severn, and bring two of the country's most beautiful waterways back to life.

Once restored, the 29-mile Thames & Severn Canal and the 8-mile Stroudwater Navigation would form a continuous waterway from Stroud to Lechlade in Gloucestershire, including the 2 1/4 mile Sapperton Tunnel connecting the Thames to the Severn.

Restoration of the Cotswold Canals has long been the ambition of the Cotswold Canals Trust, the Inland Waterways Association and the Waterway Recovery Group and so much important conservation work has been achieved by them.

In July last year a formal partnership was launched to build on work to date and to drive restoration plans forward.
The partnership includes BW, The Waterways Trust, The Cotswold Canals Trust, the South West of England Regional Development Agency, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire county councils and Stroud, and Cotswold and North Wiltshire district councils.

THE DROITWICH CANALS

Opened in 1771, the Droitwich Barge Canal was one of the first waterways to be built in the late eighteenth century and linked Droitwich to the River Severn some seven miles away.

The Droitwich Junction Canal opened in 1852 as a narrow canal and conversely, was one of the last canals to be built in England, linking the Droitwich Barge Canal with the Worcester & Birmingham Canal two miles away. The two canals were officially closed and abandoned in July 1939.

Restoration would provide an enticing new 21-mile waterway ring including the River Severn and Worcester & Birmingham Canal. It could become an important new cruising waterway unlocking significant potential for business and leisure development.

A partnership project to take forward the restoration of the canals was announced in 2000. The plan *'Droitwich Canals for the Future'* builds on the commitment of Wychavon District Council and Worcestershire County Council. The project will bring together the funding and management expertise of BW and The Waterways Trust, and draws on the dedication and enthusiasm of volunteers from the Droitwich Canals Trust and Waterway Recovery Group.

FOXTON INCLINED PLANE

Situated on the Leicester Line of the Grand Union Canal, Foxton Inclined Plane was originally built between 1898 and 1900 to replace an existing flight of ten locks and speed up the transit of boats along the waterway.

Boats entered wheeled tanks of water which were then trundled sideways on rails between the two levels of the canal – a 75ft difference. Both tanks were moved at any one time, one descending as the other ascended.

For a decade the Inclined Plane worked well reducing the transit time through the locks from 70 minutes to just 12. However, hoped for traffic never materialised and in 1910, the locks were reinstated. The significant elements of Foxton Inclined Plane were demolished. A comprehensive feasibility study has indicated that the full restoration of the Plane is both feasible and desirable.

A partnership is now working on a development plan, which includes an interim aim to rewater the canal arm and reconnect it to the Leicester Line. Also planned are a study into better interpretation of what remains of the plane and access improvements, as well as a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for funding contributions.

Left to Right: Grand Union Canal at Milton Keynes, Cotswold Canals, Droitwich Canals, Foxton Inclined Plane.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING CONTINUED

MONTGOMERY CANAL

The beautiful Montgomery Canal was originally three canals – a branch of the Ellesmere Canal and eastern and western sections of the Montgomery Canal. It was not completed until 1821 and joined the Llangollen Canal at Frankton Junction in Shropshire with the market towns of Welshpool and Newtown in Powys.

In the canal's heyday, it carried limestone for agricultural use, wooden and leather goods and even passengers. The canal was eventually abandoned in 1944.

In 1999 The Montgomery Canal Partnership was formed with representatives from the voluntary sector, local authorities, BW and the wildlife trusts to actively take forward the sustainable restoration of the canal.

The canal is now an important haven for wildlife and much of its length is a declared Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). BW and the Canal Partnership are working closely with the Countryside Council for Wales and English Nature to ensure the sustainable restoration and future management of this valuable environmental asset.

THE NORTHERN REACHES OF THE LANCASTER CANAL

The Lancaster Canal was authorised by Act of Parliament in 1792, creating a broad (14ft) navigation linking the Lancaster coalfield to Kendal. The current 58 miles of the canal, including the so-called 'Northern Reaches', stretch from Preston in the south to Kendal in the north.

The waterway was a main artery in the economic development of Cumbria and Lancashire and from its opening was an important focus for passenger traffic, leisure and recreation. The architectural heritage of the canal is of national importance.

Following the construction of the M6 motorway in the 1960s, the 14-mile Northern Reaches of this beautiful canal were effectively blocked off.

The Northern Reaches Restoration Group, encompassing a range of partners, has been formed to take the project forward. A strategy for funding this vast scheme is being led by The Waterways Trust. Restoration will play a key role in rural regeneration for the region, which was severely affected by the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak.

THE LEEDS & LIVERPOOL CANAL EXTENSION

BW is actively involved in the renaissance of Liverpool's waterfront with various partners. One of the key opportunities is the creation of a new waterway link with the Leeds & Liverpool Canal around the Pier Head area.

Liverpool's world famous waterfront offers huge potential for the successful sustainable regeneration of the city centre. The new half-mile canal would help to create a vibrant waterfront connecting all the docks, attracting more boats and providing animation and vitality for the waterfront.

The new canal link could help to create some 200 new jobs, attract a further 200,000 visitors annually to the south docks and bring £3.8 million visitor spend to the area.

At the end of last year residents were asked to give their view on four proposed routes, with 88% of those questioned in favour of the overall idea. A clear favourite emerged and BW is now in consultation with Liverpool City Council and Liverpool Vision, the city's regeneration company, to move the project forward.

BOW BACK RIVERS

The Bow Back Rivers are a fascinating network of tributaries of the River Lee Navigation in East London. Originally used to power flour and grain mills in the 18th century, the waterways were upgraded in the 1930s to accommodate floodwaters as well as cargo boats for local industry.

With the decline in canalside industries in the 20th century the Bow Back Rivers fell into disuse. Now at the start of the 21st century, BW believes that they are set for a complete renaissance. A combination of major regeneration schemes in the area, together with the planned Channel Tunnel Rail Link at Stratford, means that the rivers could transform the area into the Amsterdam of East London, and create a new gateway to the UK waterway network. Discussions are currently underway with local authorities and other stakeholders.

THE MANCHESTER BOLTON & BURY CANAL

Situated within the north of the Manchester conurbation, the 15-mile Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal once linked Manchester with the industrial towns of Bolton and Bury, via Salford.

In 1936 a major breach combined with competition from the local railway brought about the canals' decline and in 1962 navigation finally ceased.

The first stage of the project is to restore the canal navigation from the River Irwell finishing close to Bury town centre. It is hoped that the restoration will attract £6 million income annually for the region along with investment and employment to the area.

The restored canal will have links to a large number of development, recreation, countryside, heritage and tourist initiatives, many already having secured government funding.

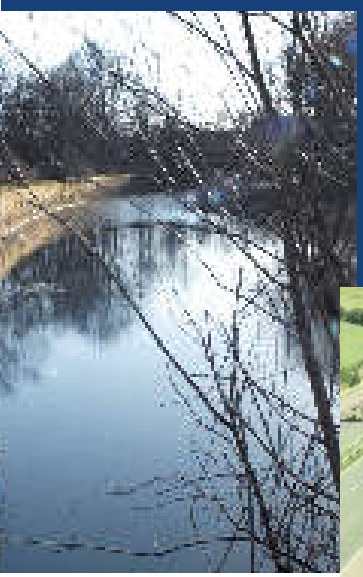
The creation of this new and vibrant community resource will further enhance this area of Manchester as a visitor destination.

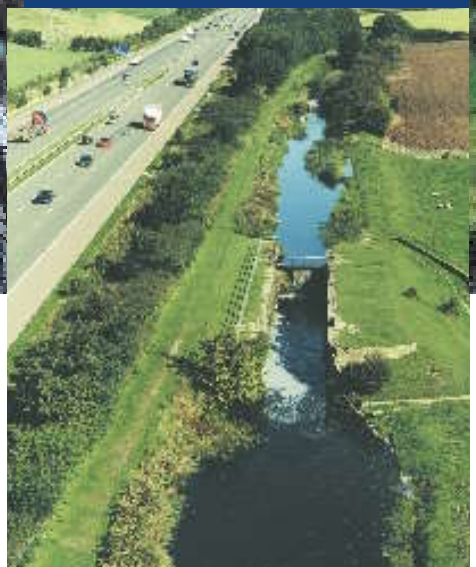
IT'S JUST THE START!

The potential of these exciting schemes is huge, but can only be unlocked if BW successfully builds a broad range of supporters and partners to underpin each project.

BW is at the beginning of an exhilarating ride. It's certainly a daunting task, but then, as 2002 demonstrates, achieving impossible dreams has become something of a waterway speciality.

For information on all of these projects visit the BW website at www.britishwaterways.co.uk/restoration





Left to Right: The Montgomery Canal, Liverpool's Waterfront, the Bow Back Rivers, the Northern Reaches of the Lancaster Canal, the Manchester, Bolton & Bury Canal.

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF **BRUCE HARDING** PHOTO LIBRARY GURU!

Boat and heritage enthusiast Bruce Harding is the visual images specialist for British Waterways. There is no such thing as a typical week for Bruce. Although his main responsibility is managing the photo library, he gets involved with many other activities and projects. Best of all, he gets to visit some the most beautiful and fascinating sites on the waterway network.

Rachel Pickett focuses on the work of Bruce Harding…

Bruce started at BW in November 1988 as project officer at Braunston. He later became recreation manager before transferring to Head Office to undertake a detailed study of 'waterway distinctiveness'. He moved across to the position of visual images specialist in March 1999 where he's been ever since.

His main role at BW is custodian of the photo library. The job entails managing the classification, storage and retrieval of the photographs within the library. He also is responsible for commissioning and sourcing new photography and managing the supply of images externally and internally.

Images are used in BW's own publications, like Waterfront, and are also sent out to wide variety of magazines, newspapers, journals and brochures. Waterway scenes showing every aspect of BW's work are in constant demand to help promote the waterways and new photographs are always required.

During the week I followed him, Bruce received new images of the Rochdale Canal and the Manchester Bolton & Bury Canal from aerial photographers Cloud 9. "The great thing about using a company like Cloud 9 is that they take amazing elevated pictures" he told me, "They have a trailer with an 80ft mast that they stick a camera on top of to take the pictures!"

Photographs taken over the winter period were also starting to arrive. "I have a few photographers on standby. As soon as it starts snowing they rush out to capture it" he said.

Bruce's interest in waterways extends beyond the walls of BW. He is involved in ongoing work promoting the conservation of historic boats and recently achieved an MA in Industrial Heritage.

When the images arrive Bruce has to go through them individually on a light box with a magnifier. He has to select the ones good enough to go into the library. They then get sent away to be professionally scanned, before being added to the library catalogue.

"On average I have to search, select, save and send up to 200 images each week", he explains, "The requests vary enormously, from single specific pictures of particular locations through to options for every photograph being used in a large report or presentation. The library output is now 100% digital, so I never send originals."

Bruce sometimes has to go out on site visits to make sure he understands the scene and location before a photographer is commissioned to capture the event or scenery. He meets the photographer at the site to explain what photographs he would like taken. When I spoke to him he had just visited the Rochdale Canal, which is nearing the end of restoration.

He is currently working on developing a web-based photo library. The project, to be known as 'Reservoir', will improve the standards of images available, free the resources presently tied up in searching for and distributing the images, and make the delivery of images much quicker. At present Bruce is updating the information in the current photo library database and making sure it's accurate.

Bruce's interest in waterways extends beyond the walls of BW. He is involved in ongoing work promoting the conservation of historic boats and recently achieved an MA in Industrial Heritage. He is continuing research towards a national catalogue of historic boats.

To make the most of his knowledge and experience Bruce helps out on the staff induction course held once a month at Stoke Bruerne. After the ice-breaker session Bruce takes the inductees on a journey back in time and explains about the development and history of the network.

He likes to call his talk 'Our Inheritance' where he explains the past of BW and how we reached the position of the waterways today.

So, from images to information, Bruce is certainly the man to put you in the picture.

Pictured far left: Bruce at the induction course for BW staff in Stoke Bruerne, below: searching for images in the office. above: Bruce on his boat 'Pickled"

THEN AND NOW

COURTESY OF MARTINE HAMILTON KNIGHT PHOTOGRAPHY

NOTTINGHAM

Situated on the Nottingham Canal and River Trent, Nottingham's name derives from the Anglo-Saxon settlement of Snotingham (the village of the Snot's people). It was occupied by the Danes in the 9th century and became their most important centre. The Normans also recognised the strategic importance of Nottingham and built a castle here.

Nottingham might be best known for its colourful history - Robin Hood, William the Conqueror, Lord Byron and DH Lawrence to name a few, but it's also known for its colourful boats!
Three men – Thomas Oldknow, John Morris and Henry Green – first encouraged the Nottingham Canal to be built in 1790.

The plan was to build a canal that would halve the journey for the movement of coal into Nottingham from the surrounding mines. Work on the canal started in 1792 and by April 1796 the entire length was complete. Coal wasn't the only cargo to be carried on the new canal, building materials, house bricks, lime timber and tobacco were also a frequent sight.

Business was booming and in early 1796 the canal was to expand when the Trent Navigation Company opened the Beeston Cut, which enabled boats to by-pass a notoriously difficult part of the Trent.

However by the 1840's, as was happening all around the canal network, railway mania had arrived. The Amber, Boston & Eastern Junction Railway Company eventually took ownership of the Nottingham Canal in 1855. Over the next decade the railway company was taken over and merged numerous times until it finally became part of Great Northern Railway. Despite the Great Northern Railway doing nothing to keep traffic alive, the canal managed to survive for another 80 years.

Trade had been virtually wiped out and the main bulk of the Nottingham Canal was eventually closed down. The only section to remain open was the stretch in Nottingham, between Trent Bridge and Lenton. Taken over by the River Trent Navigation in 1936, it has remained open ever since.

These days Castle Wharf is at the heart of Nottingham's canal system. Redeveloped, it is now a vibrant location attracting thousands of visitors every year and creating more than a thousand jobs. The development is characterised by restored listed buildings and a landscaped waterfront with pubs, restaurants, a health and fitness centre, a comedy club, company headquarters, magistrate's court and a community boat project.
A former BW freight depot, Wilford Street warehouse, keeps BW's presence alive and kicking by proudly displaying its name in big, bold letters along the top (see left).

While Castle Wharf draws Nottingham's night life to the canal, work to realise the potential of the waterside for the city continues. The 'Masterplan', developed by Nottingham Regeneration Limited, to develop other parts of Nottingham's waterfront along the River Trent, started this year and will take between 10 and 20 years to complete.

The plan will help deliver 4000 new dwellings in a series of waterside 'neighbourhoods'; a major flagship building; a continuous footpath and cycle way along the riverbank; two landmark cycle and pedestrian bridges; new waterside business sector; new areas of waterspace and water-based activities like Holme Pierrepont, the National Watersports Centre.
Let's just hope they don't call it Snotingham!

Main picture opposite: Castle Wharf by night

Top: (left to right) Former Wilford Street warehouse, Cruiser going through Castle Lock, Former Fellows, Morton & Clayton Depot, Magistrates building at Castle Wharf, Robin Hood at Nottingham Castle.

Shortcuts

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Doug Craigie is not a man who likes to be cooped up indoors. Fortunately his work on the Grand Union Canal near Stoke Bruerne in Northamptonshire gives him plenty of opportunity to be out and about. The softly spoken Highlander cares for the section of canal between Stowehill Wharf and Cosgrove, but is most likely to be spotted by boaters working on the canal between Blisworth Tunnel and Cosgrove Lock.

Doug joined BW in 1986 working on the Staffordshire & Worcestershire and Shropshire Union canals. He moved down to Stoke Bruerne as a lock keeper in 1990. His job as a 'multi-skilled waterway operative' involves a broad range of care and maintenance responsibilities on his patch, which is a regular winner in BW's annual Lock and Bridge Award for best kept waterways.

"In the summer this is a really busy area, attracting around 200,000 visitors, so I get to meet a lots of boaters and people around the canal. In winter we concentrate on stoppages,

putting in new lock gates and also tree work because the birds aren't nesting. No two days are the same."

Doug is very much a canal man, he always takes his work home with him – he lives right next to the canal in a former lock keeper's cottage!

ON THE CANAL BEAT

Former policeman Bob Hawkes now has a beat stretching almost 88 miles. He is the Patrol Officer for the Kennet & Avon Canal. He is primarily responsible for making sure that boats on the canal are properly licensed and for initiating legal action when they're not.

It's a big job "with 1600 craft registered on the canal and such a distance to cover, it's not logistically possible to do it all by boat so I'm usually on the beat. A routine check of the whole canal takes about six weeks" he explains.

Five volunteer rangers are based at different points along the canal to keep an eye on things for him. Legal proceedings are nothing new to Bob, he was in the police force for 31 years!

As a West Country boy 'born and bred' he feels lucky to work on such a beautiful waterway amongst wonderful countryside. "I try to ensure that peace and tranquillity reign here," he laughs.

He enjoys the variety of his work and the fact that he meets so many different people along the canal. Bob reckons his time in the police force has given him the perfect grounding for his work today. "You can learn the by-laws by heart in two days, but you can't learn how to deal with people. I really enjoy meeting our customers out there. You get the odd incident of canal rage, but the vast majority of people on the waterway are really great."

DOING WHAT COMES NATURALLY

When most people hear what Oda Dijksterhuis does, the first question they ask usually involves water voles. "People know them as the cute creatures from the 'Wind in the Willows' and are always interested in them," says the Kennet & Avon Canal's Heritage Lottery Partnership Project ecologist.

Oda moved to England nine years ago after studying a degree in environmental science in the Netherlands. She is responsible for wildlife projects on the Kennet & Avon Canal, which is nearing the end of its complete restoration. She is currently involved in a major environmental protection scheme.

Oda explains: "Basically I assess sites before engineering work begins and look at the wildlife and protected species there. My job is to make sure that they are safeguarded and that habitats are improved where possible. I'm involved with the design of schemes and when the work is underway I go out on site to make sure that everything is in line with environmental requirements."

One of the main tasks this year is nearly £20,000 worth of tree and hedge planting. "The trees are mostly native species like oak, cherry and birch and we are also planting hedgerows of hawthorn, blackthorn and dogrose," says Oda. It's the variety of her work that makes it so enjoyable. "People are always interested in

water voles, but there's so much more that we are involved with. I really enjoy trying to improve things, I think that gives me the most satisfaction," she says.

TUNNEL VISION

As education and events manager for the Standedge Tunnel Visitor Centre on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal, Sandra McCash is always looking for ways to attract new visitors. Since its opening

last year, more than 2000 schoolchildren have explored the centre and taken a ride into the tunnel, and thousands more visitors have flocked to the new waterway attraction.

Eager to find innovative ways to promote and use the centre, Sandra has also organised Halloween discos, 'Santa' trips and special corporate evenings on the site. This year, as part of organising a full calendar of events, she's thinking about murder mystery evenings, Jubilee celebrations and a big event to mark the centre's first year.

"It's such a fantastic place - there's so much potential here in terms of events and so much to offer for schools. It's a really exciting time," enthuses Sandra. Before working at Standedge, Sandra worked as a college lecturer and at a watersports company managing the firm's business side and marketing activities.

"I really enjoy my job, every day is different. I've met so many interesting people, from members of the public to some of the more unusual entertainers and individuals I've come into contact with through organising events – including the owners of Chitty Chitty Bang Bang," she says. But Sandra insists her most memorable occasion to date has been organising a royal visit and meeting the Prince of Wales.

GOING DUTCH

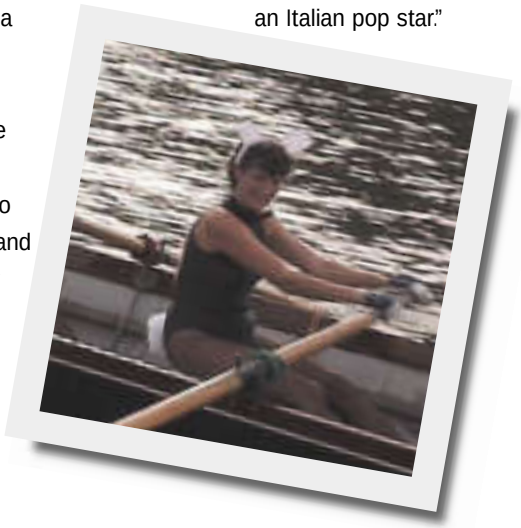
After living on a narrowboat for four years, London's Poplar Dock Marina manager Sue King has opted for more space afloat and has bought herself a Dutch barge. "I loved my narrowboat, but I had a terrible longing for a washing machine on board and there just wasn't space," she explained. In January her Dutch barge 'Rosie' was stuck in ice in north Holland, waiting for a thaw before making the channel crossing.

Sue's role at Poplar Dock involves a great deal of customer contact. Sue says "One of the most important things I do is making sure that boaters understand what it's like to be out on the tideway.

If you've only been on the inland waterways and not on the tidal Thames before, it takes some getting used to. I must be the only woman in London who carries a spare anchor around in her car!"

She reckons that the best part of her work is the people. "We have a real mix here and I don't think they'd mind if I said that one of the great things about Poplar is the slightly bohemian atmosphere.

There are lots of medical people, alternative therapists and even an Italian pop star."



Sue, who has been known to dress up as a bunny girl and row a boat, has worked for BW for three years. "Before that I was desk bound at London City Airport. My office had no windows and it just wasn't me. I really enjoy my work now."

JUMPING THE FENCE

When Ken Middleton started a new job as waterway supervisor on the Huddersfield Narrow Canal last year he reckons he was jumping the fence. He used to do the same job for the Calder & Hebble Navigation.

Based at BW's Castle Quay office in Manchester, Ken spends about half his time out on the cut and half in the office.

"In the summer months though, I'm out meeting the customers most of the time and that's really important," he adds. Although the canal has only been open for one season, it's been a hectic and rewarding year. "The Huddersfield Narrow Canal is quite a challenge," Ken explains. "At the beginning a lot of people didn't realise just how hard it was to take on those 74 locks."

Ken supervises a team of 18, carrying out the daily maintenance of the canal, which includes everything from lock repairs and replacements, to grass cutting.

"You never get two days the same and you're out there in the fresh air, enjoying the environment," he says.

"The variety is great, and that's true of the canal too. It's got a bit of everything – industrial heritage, scenic countryside and even the longest, deepest and highest tunnel on the network - Standedge Tunnel. I'm very lucky that I care for such a unique canal – there's not many around like it."

If you like the sound of working for BW visit their website at www.britishwaterways.co.uk/recruitment to see current job vacancies.

HEDGING YOUR BETS

DID YOU KNOW IF ALL BW'S HEDGEROWS WERE LINED UP END TO END THEY WOULD STRETCH FROM LONDON TO THE ISLE OF SKYE- THAT'S OVER 600 MILES!

Most of the hedgerows alongside the waterway network were planted when the canals were firstbuilt and have now become home to a wide range of plants and animals. Due to many hedgerows in the wider countryside being removed, the value of waterway hedgerows has increased over the last few decades. BW, in partnership with volunteer groups, is taking an active role in managing the hedges properly and hedgelaying is a vital part of this.

Waterfront spent the day getting first hand experience of hedgelaying on the Peak Forest Canal…
Think 'Last of the Summer Wine' and you'll come pretty close to the scene that awaited me when I joined local volunteers and BW Staff for a hedgelaying session near Disley on the Peak Forest Canal. I don't mean the characters though, I mean the spectacular view.

Our hedge-layers were, thankfully, a far cry from your Nora Battys and Foggys. So why do they give up their free time to do this? "It's hard work, but it's fun! You feel a real sense of achievement; as though you're really doing something not only for the good of visitors to the canal, but for the wildlife that inhabit the bankside," explains local volunteer Malcolm Bower when talking about his experience in hedgelaying. As a member of the Macclesfield Canal Society for many years Malcolm certainly has some experience. "We saw that this needed doing so we came to do it! It's not the only thing we get involved in, whenever BW need a hand we are there to help."

Volunteers and BW staff alike busy themselves on the towpath under the watchful eye of hedgerow expert Alison Marchant. "There are three reasons why we lay the hedges in this way," explains Alison, whose appearance here today was part funded by the Mersey Basin Scheme. "Firstly to create a stock proof barrier, secondly, to rejuvenate the hedge, and thirdly, for the wildlife value. Slowly birds will start to feed on the berries in the trees, and it's not unusual for a robin to keep a watchful eye on you as you lay the hedge.

"In fact he'll move in as soon as you've finished!" continues Alison, who works with BW training staff and volunteers all over the country. "Hedges with ditches also make a great habitat for amphibians and reptiles, especially when they are so close to the waterway."

"We're helping to lay this old gappy hedge which has, until now, been cut mechanically," chips in Roger Teagle, the waterway supervisor on the Peak & Potteries Waterways. "We're using traditional hedge laying methods to make it stock-proof and give it an extra 10-15 years of life.

"We cut partially through the wood leaving bark on one side," continues Roger. "This allows it to continue growing - encouraging new growth to come through at the base. When the Peak Forest Canal was first built in the late 18th century the hedges would have been laid like this.

"Come back in five years and you'll see what has become a hedge full of birds, mammals and, being so close to the water, amphibians," encourages Roger.

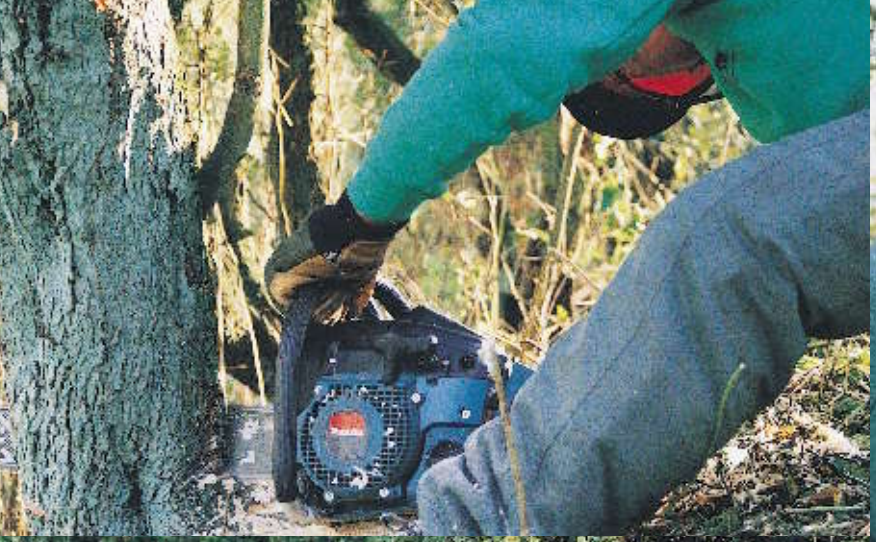
A three-day session like this can expect to see between 60 and 100 metres completed. Areas where these hedges have been laid seem to attract visitors who enjoy the peaceful tranquillity and beautiful scenery they offer as well as providing a variety of wildlife with secure habitats. As Alison says: "you'll always find a boat moored up where we have done the hedges."

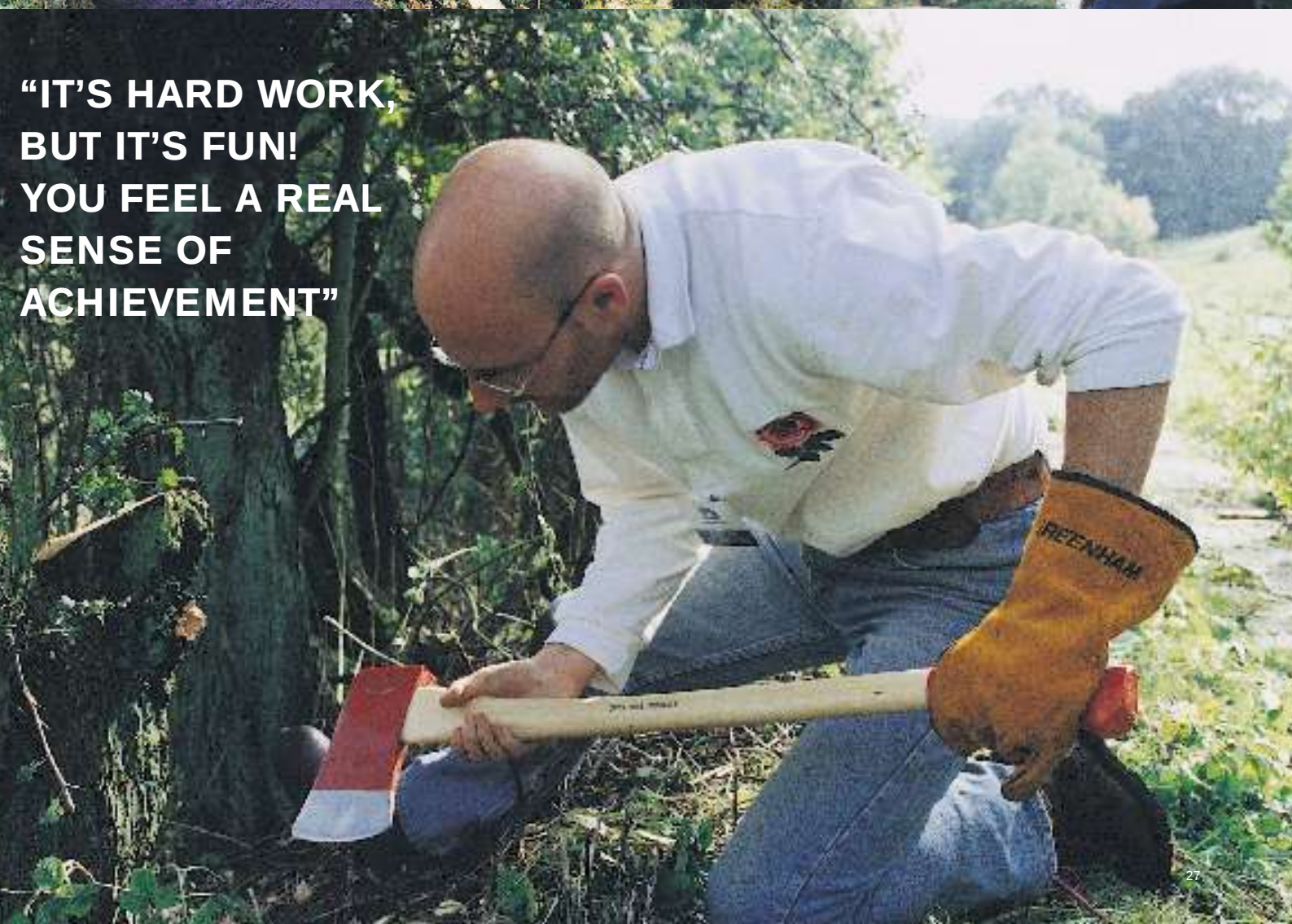
MANAGING HEDGES

BW maintain a variety of hedgerow heights and manage hedge lengths on a cyclical basis. If well planned this leads to better landscaping and biodiversity. Just keeping to a set height won't thicken up the base. BW need to properly manage the hedgelaying projects in order to keep them flourishing. BW now has a memorandum of agreement with the Hedgerow Trust to work together on hedgerow projects.

Individual Waterways are starting to gradually develop their own plans. For example Grand Union Canal South have developed a hedge management plan for half of the waterway. This work has been granted Countryside Stewardship funding and demonstrates best practice in hedge management.

Clockwise from top right: volunteer Stuart Barnes, volunteer Malcolm Bower, Roger Teagle, waterway supervisor using traditional hedgelaying methods, Alison Marchant, Hedgerow Expert and BW Reservoir keeper Kevin Bottrill gets busy with a chainsaw!





“IT’S HARD WORK, BUT IT’S FUN! YOU FEEL A REAL SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT”

Letters

Dear Editor

I was very saddened by Louis Jankel's letter regarding hedgerows along the towpath. I have studied our local hedgerows over many years and have found that there are many more birds nests in the taller hedges, over the five foot mark, than there are in low cut hedges.

I love to see the mass of gloriously coloured haws in the autumnal tall hedges. Furthermore, my boat has a lightweight glass reinforced plastic hull. I need the winter shelter afforded by tall hedgerows.

PLEASE let us keep a variety of hedge heights, with hedges being allowed to grow back after laying, and stop cutting them every year. Please may we also have a variety of fruiting trees as standards, and less ash?

Shelagh Rogers
Northamptonshire

Please turn to page 26 for our article on hedgelaying.

Dear Editor

(In reply to letter from Helen Morris).

On a recent trip on the Mon & Brec in September. We came across a New Zealand coach driver and his wife who hadn't seen a lock, and had no idea of how to operate one (no instruction was possible by the hirer as all the locks are located far from the hire base). We gave them instruction and took them through the top lock and stood by whilst they negotiated the second lock. We find it very unusual that they (Helen Morris) found hostility whilst on the Cheshire Ring. We have hired on many occasions but now have a
cara-cruiser of our own. Things have changed over the last 30 years but the friendliness is still abundant. There are no doubt quite a few gin palaces afloat now but the majority of private boat owners have come through the ranks and are as helpful as ever they were.

We find most anglers tolerant but would agree that 'some' bikers could do with a speed limit on all canals and especially on our own Taunton & Bridgwater towpath - something less than 40mph. To put out your picnic chairs and have some lunch on the bank is a dangerous hobby these days.
We love the magazine.

Brian and Sandy Gilbert
Somerset

The Boaters Handbook (enclosed for BW licence holders with this magazine) will also be sent out to all hireboat companies – hopefully this will help newcomers to boating.

Dear Sir

Congratulations on an interesting, informative, and well designed 'Waterfront' magazine. I detect a link in several of the letters in issue 3. Ted Wilkes said 'Four years ago was a sad time for many of us with many years experience on the waterways with well maintained (we thought) boats. Bits and pieces ripped out and holes cut in doors and hulls for the cost of over a thousand pounds…'

Raymond Atkinson wrote '… and if licences go up any more to buy marinas and carpet offices then our boating days are numbered.' And Helen Morris regretted that, '… our trip was somewhat marred by the rather hostile reception we encountered from a considerable number of 'private' boat owners…'

It is my belief that the distress to Helen (and others) is caused directly as a result of the huge increase in the cost of boating in recent years. As with Raymond, finance will limit my boating days, too. I wish I could offer a quick solution. Perhaps the awkward boaters will come to love both the canal and fellow boaters, or hate it and leave. This did happen in the 1970s. In conversation with former chairman Bernard Henderson, I suggested a reduced rate for pensioners, but he was advised by BW officials that every boat on the cut would suddenly be registered to Granddads who never went on the boat!

Any helpful suggestions would be more than welcome. Meanwhile, let us all be kind to each other!

Geoff Monk
Oxon

Dear Editor

In the last issue of 'Waterfront' a letter appeared regarding problems at electrically operated bridges with vandals creating mayhem. This particular bridge at Thorne on the Sheffield & South Yorkshire Navigations has been a problem for some years and this association has complained to the local Waterways Manager many times, with suggestions such as BW staff being employed at such points, especially during school holidays.

The reply has usually been similar to the one printed, promising nothing except hints that CCTV may be used in the future (as stated they have installed some, but only to protect their equipment from customers!). A recent User Group meeting produced a pathetic 'what can we do?' which appears to sum up the BW whole approach to this problem which is worthy of greater attention.

Similarly we have tried to ascertain whose insurance would cover any damage to boaters or vandals, if an accident occurred, as it surely will.

Alan Hodgkinson
AWCC, North East Regional Chairman

Please send letters to:
The Editor, Waterfront Magazine, British Waterways, Willow Grange, Church Road, Watford WD17 4QA

I am saddened and sorry to read again of the threatening behaviour by local youths at Thorne. It is something that BW want to put an end to, and we believe the best way of doing this is to work closely with the local police. Our patrol officer has established good relations with the local community policeman and they are looking into using CCTV footage. In answer to your suggestion we believe that a BW bridge keeper would not solve the problem, in fact past experience has shown that they will sadly be ignored. We remain open to any further suggestions of how to deal with this matter.

Keith Ellis, waterway manager South Yorkshire Navigations

Dear Editor

Navigation of Standedge Tunnel.

Having navigated the Huddersfield Narrow Canal on our narrowboat 'Bliss' this summer in the company of two other members of our family, we read A. Williams' query on the cost of the tunnel passage with interest. We received such excellent service during both our passage of the tunnel and our navigation of the canal that we felt impelled to write and support Julie Maund's explanation of the cost involved.

At 8am on the day of Bliss's passage through the tunnel from the Marsden portal, around five BW men arrived and began to 'sheet up' the three boats with rubber matting. A couple of others started work to remove a block of wood which had fouled the propeller on the trip through the tunnel the day before. The sheeting up process was heavy work and it took at least two hours before all three boats were protected to the satisfaction of British Waterways. The boats finally entered Standedge Tunnel at 10.20am. Our boat re-emerged at Diggle just before 2pm. All the operatives looked like coal-miners and then had the laborious task of removing the rubber sheets. Apart from being a bit dirty from the soot in the tunnel and the grit from the mats, Bliss suffered no damage. This was due to all the care and hard work on the part of BW staff.

As we made our passage in early August, the passenger module was still not in operation. Instead we were given a free trip around the Visitor Centre, which included a short trip into the tunnel, followed by a free taxi ride over the moor from Marsden to Diggle. We considered that we had received very good value for passage fee of £35, particularly bearing in mind the good humour of the BW staff, despite the heavy tiring work involved.

Sandra and Roger Silvester
Surrey

Dear Sir

Most publications announced the opening of Aston Locks on the Montgomery Canal as during 1997. Why is it we are still waiting to cruise more of this very pretty and interesting canal in 2001?

I have watched with great interest all the hard work put into the restoration and linking up to the Llangollen branch of this canal but still we are unable to go through Aston Locks.
I know there are areas of scientific interest along the canal course but these areas seem to be taking priority over boaters being able to cruise the canal to visit these areas which surely is the reason for the restoration of the canal in the first place. I also have reason to believe that when the canal is finally open the amount of boats using it could be severely restricted. Surely all this red tape will cause many boaters to loose interest and much revenue for businesses along the canal will be lost.

I want to visit my home village of Llanymynoch on my own boat but the way things are going I am going to have to visit it on a hotel boat because I am too old to work my own any longer. Please when will we be able to go further than Queens Head?

Jacky Croft-Griggs
Holywell

Thank you for your letter. Currently the Montgomery Canal is available for cruising from Frankton Locks where it branches away from the main line of the Llangollen Canal to Queens Head, 4 miles of navigable waterway.
The Waterway Recovery Group restored the three locks at Aston. Below the locks the first available full-length winding hole is at Maesbury. The length from Aston Locks to Gronwen Bridge was restored under contract last year at a value of over £1M with the last of the dredging works being completed on site at the moment. The canal will now have an establishment period of one full growing season before it will be reopened in Spring 2003. Restoration speed has been governed by available funding streams and this may be why the dates identified by third parties have not been accurate. The canal is indeed important for its ecology, the majority of the canal is now classed as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and the canal in Wales is a candidate site for a Special Area of Conservation, the highest European designation. British Waterways is working closely with its partners via the Montgomery Canal Partnership for the sustainable restoration of the Montgomery Canal. We have recently been awarded funding by the Heritage Lottery Fund towards the preparation of Conservation Management Strategy for the whole canal and this will form the basis for future funding and restoration.
Julie Sharman, waterway manager Border Counties Waterways

Waterway Events & Festivals 2002

Listed here is just a selection of the vast number of events and festivals taking place on or around the waterways this year. Please note that details are correct as far as we know at the time of going to press, however we strongly recommend that you check in advance. Check listings on the BW website www.britishwaterways.co.uk

APR	Eggstravaganza	**2nd - 7th**	Easter fun	Gloucester Waterways Museum	01452 318054
	Gather Of Historic Boats	**12th - 15th**	Local event	Ellesmere Port Museum	0151 355 5017
	Cuckoo Day Celebration	**27th**	Annual festival	Marsden	01484 844298
MAY	Standedge festival	**1st - 6th**	Local event	Standedge	01484 844298
	Skipton Festival	**4th - 5th**	Local event	Skipton	01274 611303
	IWA Canalway Cavalcade	**4th - 6th**	Canal Boat Gathering	Little Venice	07970 835523
	Hunt the Headline	**4th - 6th**	Fun Challenge	Ellesmere port	0151 355 5017
	Boats on Show	**9th - 12th**	Boat event	Beale Park - Pangbourne	01784 481739
	Rickmansworth Canal Festival	**18th - 19th**	Canal festival	Batchworth Lock	01923 778382
	The Luddite Lunacy Festival	**19th**	Morris Dancing	Standedge	01484 844298
	Engine Society Rally	**19th**	Local event	Gloucester Waterways Museum	01452 318054
	Bell Lawrie Scottish Series	**23rd - 25th**	Yacht Race	Tarbert Loch Fyne	01546 603210
	Doncaster Regatta	**25th**	Rowing club regatta	Hexthorpe Park	01302 340610
JUNE	Standedge Jubilee	**1st - 9th**	Jubilee festivities	Marsden	01484 844298
	Northwich on water	**1st - 2nd**	Local event	Northwich	01244 390372
	Crick Boat Show	**1st - 3rd**	National event	Crick Marina	01788 891555
	Great Glen Raid	**1st - 9th**	International Boat Race	Fort William	01463 713504
	Tring canal Festival	**2nd - 3rd**	Canal festival	Wendover	01442 825938
	Fifties Fun	**3rd - 7th**	Crafts & Games	Ellesmere Port Museum	0151 355 5017
	Newark On Water	**7th - 9th**	Community Arts Festival	Newark	01636 704481
	Dragon Boat Racing	**9th**		Sprotborough Lock, Doncaster	01302 340610
	Middlewich Folk & Boat Festival	**14th - 16th**	Local Community Festival	Middlewich	01782 785703
	Mersey Riverside Festival	**14th - 16th**	Waterside Festival	Albert Docks	01257 481054
	Dinghy Dawdle/Brynderwen	**16th**	Boat gathering		01244 390372
	Father's Day	**16th**	Family day	Standedge	01484 844298
	Whaley Water Weekend	**22nd - 23rd**	Regional event	Whaley Bridge Basin	
	Oxford Canal Festival	**23rd**	Local Community Festival	Oxford City	01788 891555
	Fielding Engine demonstrations	**29th - 30th**	Local event	Gloucester Waterways Museum	01452 318054
	Teddy Bears Picnic	**30th**	Family day	Standedge	01484 844298
JULY	Eisteddfad Festival	**9th - 14th**	International Music Festival	Llangollen	01244 390372
	Walk On Water	**13th - 14th**	National event	various	0845 602 4565
	Jazz Festival	**13th**	Local Music event	Wigan Pier	01257 481054
	Rotherham Water Festival	**13th**	Local event	Rotherham	0114 272 2003
	Tobermory	**13th - 15th**	Yacht race	Tobermory	01546 603210
	Classic Malts	**13th - 15th**	Yacht Race	Classic Malts Crinan	01546 603210
	Inland Waterway Exhibition	**19th - 21st**	National Exhibition	Birmingham	01283 742950
	Leeds on Water	**19th - 21st**	Local event	Thaite Mill Industrial Museum	01977 554351
	Nantwich Show	**24th**	Local event	Nantwich	01244 390372
	Tennants West Highland Week	**26th - 3rd Aug**	Yacht race		01546 603210
	Braunston Boat Gathering	**28th**	Local event	Braunston	01788 891555
	Chocs away	**27th - 1st Sep**	Chocolate related events	Gloucester Waterways Museum	01452 318054
	Summer Holidays	**July & August**	Various Events	Ellesmere Port Museum	0151 355 5017
AUGUST	Fish'o'mania	**3rd**	National fishing competition	Doncaster	01302 340610
	Waterfire	**11th**	Regional event		0161 819 5847
	IWA National Waterway Festival and Inland Boat Show	**23rd - 26th**	National Canal Festival	Huddersfield	0870 2402438
	Upton Water Festival	**24th - 25th**	Waterside festival	River Severn	01684 592336
	Model boat convention	**25th - 26th**	Uk's largest display of model boats & trade fair	Ellesmere Port Museum	0151 355 5017
	Red Bull Open Weekend	**31st - 1st**	Local canal festival	Red Bull Wharf	01782 785 703
	Waterway exhibition	**August**	Waterway arts and crafts	Earth Centre, Doncaster	01302 340610
SEPT	Angel Canal Festival	**1st - 2nd**	Canal Festival	Islington	0207 226 4597
	Heritage Open Days	**6th - 9th**	National event	various	01923 201451
	Southampton Boat Show	**13th - 22nd**	National event	Southampton	01784 223600
	Black Country Boating Festival	**14th - 15th**	Boat Rally		01384 397204
	Bank Holiday Bonanza	**24th - 26th**	Family fun	Standedge	01484 844298
	Banbury Boats	**28th - 29th**	Local event	Banbury	01788 891555
	Festival Of Water and Light	**28th**	Waterside Festival	Merryhill, Dudley	0121 506 1300
	Kayak Race UK	**TBC**	National kayak event	Crinan Canal	01546 603210